



Inter Department Correspondence Sheet

TO: Members of City Council

FROM: Breck Daughtrey, City Clerk

COPIES TO: \_\_\_\_\_

SUBJECT: Minutes of City Council Meeting

May 13, 2014

Attached are the minutes of the City Council Budget Hearing meeting held on Wednesday, May 7, 2014.

Breck

**NORFOLK, VIRGINIA**  
**BUDGET HEARING**  
**GRANBY HIGH SCHOOL**

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 7, 2014 – 6:00 P.M.**

Mayor Fraim called the Budget Public Hearing to order at 6:05 p.m. with the following members present: Ms. Green, Mr. Protogyrou, Mr. Riddick, Mr. Smigiel, Dr. Whibley, Ms. Williams and Mr. Winn.

The opening prayer was offered by Vice Mayor Angela Williams followed by the pledge of allegiance.

He thereupon called for the first speaker.

Dr. Kirk T. Houston, Norfolk Public Schools Board Chairman, stated that the School Board's proposed budget reflects their priorities and resources that are needed and are essential for continued progress. Increased salaries support their employees and teachers, who need and deserve a pay increase so that they may retain and continue to attract highly effective teachers and other staff members. He asked that they fully fund the budget that they have presented and proposed. They also realize that money is not the answer to all of their challenges, but more resources are greatly needed in order for them to fulfill the strategic plan and to continue the progress that they have begun to make this year.

Dr. Samuel T. King, Superintendent of Schools, stated that he is grateful that they have had multiple opportunities to discuss the school division's needs as they draw towards the end of the year. Their beliefs focus on the fact that excellent public education and excellent public education systems are cornerstones of economic development, health and vitality for this community. It is true that their operating revenues and expenditures have decreased over time. In the process of developing their operating budget for fiscal year 2015, they have reduced their base operating costs by nearly \$10 million and they are continuing to evaluate their programs for efficiency and effectiveness in terms of their results for children. Meanwhile, their challenges have increased exponentially. The percentage of students who qualify for free and reduced lunch-priced meals, an indicator of economic disadvantage, has increased by

double digits in recent years. State mandates should cross multiple domains including student achievement, benchmarks and requirements for technology and online testing continue to increase. In order to meet both of their challenges, an enormous promise of their strategic plan, the Governance Leadership Team has requested additional support from the City. They appreciate the city's leadership for consistently asking them to reflect their real needs and their budget request does that. The proposed operating budget for Norfolk Public Schools addresses multiple areas of critical need in order to advance their strategic plan. They must continue to attract and retain highly qualified and highly effective teachers and staff in competition with other local divisions in the area. Therefore, a salary increase for their entire staff and teachers is urgent. Their budget request also addresses the ongoing need for technology infrastructure. They respectfully request our city leaders consider full funding of the school board's budget request so that they may continue to forge a strategic path for Norfolk Public Schools.

Ms. Amy Woods, 1201 Buckingham Avenue, stated that she is a Norfolk Public Schools parent and a member of Norfolk Gains. She stated that the most important economic stimulus and largest line item in the city's budget is our schools. Businesses choose or don't choose Norfolk because of the reputation of our schools and the prospect of the educated work force. Norfolk Gains has stood before this Council many times asking for financial support of our schools and for support of changing the term lengths of the school board members and for support in building new schools and each time they have been able to work together. She asked all who support Norfolk Public Schools to please stand. (Approximately 50 people stood to be acknowledged.) She stated that they stand before Council, again, asking them to make the tough decision to support the hard work of the school board that was appointed. The money that they have requested is necessary to continue to improve the education of all of our children. The city has been very generous in providing level and increasing funding year after year for NPS. \$14 million is a significant request in the city budget that has seen dwindling state funds. She stated that the school board budget must be fully funded to support the Superintendant's transformation initiative and to retain and attract highly qualified teachers.

Ms. Charletta Williams, president of the Education Association of Norfolk located at 600 Church Street #57, stated that they are here once again to present their concerns on the Norfolk Public Schools budget. They want to attract and retain the best and the brightest teachers here in Norfolk. However, in order for them to retain good employees, City Council need to do more than

provide for building new schools. They must maintain the facilities that are older and in poor shape. She stated that they are worth more than two percent and that she is perplexed by the annual need to stand here to ask for raises for their employees. She acknowledges that more money has been allocated to the division but so has the demands of the citizens. They have technological needs and training that is necessary for all employees to meet these needs. As president of this organization, she stated that they must continue to strive for consistency with everything they do for children in Norfolk.

Ms. Gloria Cowlins, 3620 Tidewater Drive, stated that she stands tonight as a membership services specialist with the Norfolk Federation of Teachers. She stated that it appears that our teachers and support personnel are peddling in the same boat as the firefighters and police officers. Raises and salaries have been stagnant and step increases have not been in place for some time. She asked for continued support in the city's budget for teachers and support personnel.

Ms. Myra Burton, 690 Red Mill Road, stated that she is a first year teacher at Norfolk Vocational Technical Center and the parent of a student in Norfolk Public Schools. She asked Council to fully fund Norfolk Public Schools budget.

Ms. Brenda Kennedy, 1144 Bedford Avenue, stated that she lives in Norfolk and graduated from Granby High School many years ago. She stated that she is a retired teacher of Norfolk Public Schools. As a union representative, she goes out and helps the city's young teachers. She stated that Norfolk has not been taking care of its teachers. They are underpaid and mistreated and morale is low, but yet they still keep teaching. She stated that they should say thank you to at least one teacher and maybe write an article showing that they have not been forgotten.

Ms. Peggy Scott, 8405 Friden Street, stated that she is a 68-year resident of Norfolk and has noted that the city's highly qualified teachers are leaving for better paying jobs in the private sector or are applying to other school districts. She stated that now is the time to show the people of Norfolk that after all these years they do care about educating children by giving the \$14 million that is not in the current budget but was requested by the appointed school board. She asked Council to once again do the right thing and fully support the city's aging and crumbling school system.

Mr. Ellis W. James, 2021 Kenlake Place, stated that he fully endorses the comments and concerns of the people supporting the school system. He stated that yesterday's election was a clear signal that people in this community support people who support public schools. He also supports the statements from the people of the disability community.

Ms. Elizabeth Philpott, 5406 Studeley Avenue, stated that she is a graduate, a former teacher and current parent of Norfolk Public Schools. She asked for increased funding for school facility maintenance, which has been an ongoing need for some years. The School Board and NPS administration are in the process of forming a long-term facility improvement and maintenance plan with a goal to provide a healthy and safe school environment, but it will require funding. She urged Council to advocate leaders in state government for additional sources of state funding for the infrastructure of public school facilities across the Commonwealth.

Ms. Tanya Karapurkar Bhasin, 1912 N. Brandon Avenue, stated that she is a Norfolk Public Schools parent and a Norfolk Gains member. She has also served on various committees for NPS including the five-year district strategic planning team. She noted that they have developed a five-year strategic plan and have initiated the work set forth by that plan. She stated that the success of these programs is highly dependent on an improved workforce infrastructure which has been significantly compromised in recent years largely due to budget constraints. While Council has provided level funding in recent years, it is not enough. What they need is additional funding, roughly \$14 million, for teacher raises, to strengthen the infrastructure and to implement important reform strategies so they can deliver a high-quality education for all students.

Mr. Koshy Bhasin, 1912 N. Brandon Avenue, stated that he is a 4<sup>th</sup> grader at W. H. Taylor Elementary School. He stated that this year he has had three different teachers in the beginning of the school year. The schools are having trouble finding teachers and the teachers they do have are getting pulled to work in other classrooms or schools. He stated that he likes his teacher very much and she is a good teacher and should have been there from day one. Having different teachers was confusing and they had to get used to each teacher's style and the teachers had to get used to them. He asked for more money for schools because teachers are the most important thing and a strong education is important to all kids.

Mr. Thomas Calhoun, 5443 Welaka Road, president of Norfolk Federation of Teachers, asked Council to fully fund the school board's budget to provide raises for teachers and the administration like the other employees in the city are getting. He asked those representing the Norfolk Federation of Teachers to please stand. (Approximately 25 people stood to be acknowledged.)

Ms. Shirley Confino-Rehder, 938 West Princess Anne Road, chair of the Mayor's Commission for Persons with Disabilities, stated that the purpose of the Commission is to assist persons with disabilities in achieving more independent and full lives through promoting awareness of their needs to agencies and organizations and to provide a focal point for input from the disabled community into the city's decision making process. She asked Council to make allowances in the 2015 budget to bring the City closer to full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and to set aside an ongoing budget item that will bring them into the future.

Ms. Cynthia Creede, 201 Lucile Avenue, Mayor's Commission for Persons with Disabilities, stated that sidewalks form the backbone of the pedestrian transportation network and they reduce the incidence of pedestrian collisions, injuries and deaths in residential areas and along two-way roadways. Without sidewalks, public rights-of-way are inaccessible to all pedestrians, including people with disabilities. Without sidewalks pedestrians are forced to share the street with motorists. Uneven and cracked sidewalks impede travel on pedestrian routes and causes problems for people using assistive devices such as wheelchairs, walkers or canes. Traveling on these sidewalks can prove dangerous or even impossible for people who are blind or have low vision. Detectable warning devices that everyone can understand are needed in surrounding areas during construction. Many of the city's curbs and sidewalks are in need of repair. She asked for money to be set aside in the 2015 budget to repair sidewalks and to provide training to contractors before any construction starts.

Ms. Helen Nelson Brown, 901 Colonial Avenue, member of the Mayor's Commission for Persons with Disabilities and the HRT Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities, requested support in allocating funds for the completion of 4,483-plus curb ramps. The city has made a total of 6,471 ADA approved ramps. This number does not include ramps that were done years ago and are in need of repair. Without a ramp, persons who use assistive devices for travel are unable to travel safely in our city and are often forced to travel alongside cars and other vehicles in the street. Ramps enable people to

use city buses or the Tide instead of using Para-transit. She asked Council to address the need in the 2015 budget for more curb ramps and to add additional funding to replenish curb cuts in the future.

Ms. Marylin Copeland, 9720 8<sup>th</sup> View Street, Mayor's Commission for Persons with Disabilities, stated that installing audio signals will enable a person who is blind or has low vision to make street crossing more safely. They have to know when the walk interval begins. Accessible pedestrian signals and pedestrian pushbuttons communicate information about the walk and don't walk intervals at signalized intersections in non-visual formats. She asked that a thorough research be conducted to identify the use and benefits of audible signals for installation at heavily trafficked areas throughout the city, i.e. MacArthur Mall where the Tide travels; EVMS, at the intersection where the Tide ends; Wards Corner; Tidewater Drive near Southern Shopping Center and Waterside Drive near Nauticus. She asked for support in the 2015 budget to include a study of retrofitting existing pedestrian signals with audio signals.

Ms. Korinda Rusinyak, 815 Pecan Point Road, independent living coordinator at the Endependence Center, stated that no other device has such a daily impact on every citizen as does the common, ever-present traffic signal. Pedestrians and drivers place their physical safety and that of their passengers confidently in the signal's ability to give them the right-of-way. Sufficient timing to safely cross the street is necessary for everyone including people using assistive technologies. Traffic control devices should be accessible. Many controls are too high or on poles that are installed on large cement blocks or at inaccessible locations making them impossible to use for persons in wheelchairs. Adjustments have to be made that will allow the signals to be accessible to everyone. She stated that she lives near the intersection of Raby Road and Virginia Beach Boulevard and have tried to cross the street to get to the 7-Eleven. She noted that the walk signal at the crosswalk is literally three seconds and there is no way that she could make it across the street. She asked for support in the budget to improve the timing of the signal systems to give everyone a safety margin when crossing intersections in Norfolk.

Ms. Angela P. Hill, P. O. Box 1263, stated that persons who have vision, hearing or speech disabilities, also called communication disabilities, use different ways to communicate. People who are blind or have low vision may give and receive information audibly through Braille, large prints, CCTVs, qualified interpreters, communication access real time translation (CART) providers, hearing aid compatible telephones, text telephones (TTY), etcetera. Persons who are culturally deaf may give and receive information through



American Sign Language, while those who are hard of hearing or late deafened, who wear hearing aids or cochlear implants, may depend on assistive technologies in the form of captioning and assistive listening devices. Those with combined hearing and sight losses may use any of the mentioned accommodations to include tactile sign language. The ADA requires that Title II entities (local governments) provide persons with communication disabilities appropriate accommodations when requested. She asked for a budget allowance in the 2015 budget for the addition of the aforementioned accommodations.

Mr. Gray Puryear, 8009 Galveston Boulevard, stated that there are approximately 50 sets of restrooms in the City of Norfolk owned buildings, including recreation centers and libraries that do not meet ADA 1991 or 2009 Virginia Construction Code. Many cannot be made accessible to meet the codes due to age and structural issues. Many buildings can be brought up to the most feasible as possible standard of either of the two codes. Norfolk City Hall does not currently have 100 percent compliant bathroom facilities. This is a building that has public interaction daily and holds public meetings that are open to everyone except citizens who cannot access the bathrooms. The strategy in City Hall would be to do alternating floors, according to a report received by Norfolk's Project Manager and ADA officer that will meet minimal standards and offer alternatives to making existing bathrooms accessible. He asked for allowance in the budget for design and implementation to make three sets of bathrooms accessible as the first project. They are suggesting one set of accessible bathrooms on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> floors where city Council meets with the public and the first floor where the public comes to transact business.

Mr. Lawrence Brown, 925 Waltham Street, stated that he is a 20-year veteran of Norfolk Fire and Rescue and the current senior vice president of the Norfolk Professional Fire Fighters Local 68. He stated that he is here to thank Council and the City Manager for something and not complain about something. He thanked them for the retirement option plan for public safety that's proposed in this year's budget.

Mr. James Tarantino, 1142 Little Bay Avenue North, stated that he is the current president of Local 68 Norfolk Professional Firefighters. He asked that they all work together and try to establish some of the budget priorities throughout the year. He stated that the DROP Program is great, but they would like to be able to guide the process and assist in what they need to do to accomplish their goals. He also stated that they want a seat at the table and



union input with the budget. They appreciate the ERCs, but the unions do represent a larger majority of the membership of the workforce.

Mr. Arthur Eason, 2013 Hollins Court in Chesapeake, president of the City of Norfolk Retirees Association, asked Council to consider a raise for retirees. He asked those representing City of Norfolk retirees to please stand. (Approximately 20 people stood to be acknowledged.) He also asked Council to reconsider a cost of living (COLA) for the retirees.

Mr. Tom Luckman, 3192 Gallahad Drive in Virginia Beach, stated that he is a City of Norfolk retiree and chair of the Norfolk Retiree Association Benefits Committee. He addressed the lack of retiree cost of living (COLA) in the proposed budget. He thanked Councilmen Riddick and Smigiel for their comments at the budget work session inquiring why there was no COLA and requesting the City Manager to look into this omission. He stated that a COLA is not a raise but nothing more than a data driven amount needed to keep retirees from suffering a loss to their original retiree benefit. It is based on a longstanding and true and tested figure compiled by the Federal Department of Labor tracking what the increase has been for consumers in the purchase of their breadbasket items.

Ms. Vicki Love, 4419 Deacon Lane in Virginia Beach, retired City of Norfolk employee, stated that she is here again requesting a cost of living increase for retirees. She stated that she retired in 1998 and rent then was \$619 and now it is \$1,045. Gas was \$1.15 and now it is \$3.80. A stamp was .32 cents and now it is .49 cents. Eggs were .88 cents and now they are \$1.88. A candy bar was .50 cents and now it is \$1. Her favorite Oreos went from \$2.49 to \$4.59. She stated that it's no wonder that her retirement has not come close to keeping up with these prices. There is no Neiman Marcus, no Dillard's and no Macy's. It's the Dollar Tree for her.

Mr. Mike McKenna, 3124 Douglas Road in Chesapeake, stated that he is a national representative for Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and a National Associate of Government Employees (NAGE) and a member of the International Brotherhood of Police officers (IBPO). He stated that he represents approximately two million members throughout the country with approximately 20,000 in Virginia and over 5,000 in Hampton Roads. He is a retired 35-year veteran of the Norfolk Police Department. He asked Council to review the budget and try to find a way to give retirees a pay increase. He noted that he recently began circulating a petition for better pay and benefits for Norfolk retirees and have accumulated over 700 signatures so far. Police,

fire and general employee retirees are asking Council to approve the appointment of Arthur (Butch) Eason, current president of Norfolk Retirees Association, as the retired representative to the Retirement Board, which currently has three vacancies. He also thanked Council for reinstating the steps and approving the DROP Program for Public Safety Officers.

Gary Dubor, Jr., 1433 Kingston Avenue, Norfolk, VA  
Michael Ragsdale, 1026 W. 45<sup>th</sup> Street, Norfolk, VA  
Jamie Battle, 3334 Clover Hill Drive, Portsmouth, VA  
James Washington, Jr., 216 W. 33<sup>rd</sup> Street, Norfolk, VA  
Shawn Bergeron, 500 Botetourt Street, #202, Norfolk, VA  
Beecher Henderson, 529 W. 37<sup>th</sup> Street, Norfolk, VA  
John Fox, 815 W. 44<sup>th</sup> Street, Norfolk, VA

The above citizens expressed concerns about HRT's proposed closing of bus routes and change in schedules. The routes affected are 16, 17, 44 and 45. They asked the City Council for their assistance and support for maintaining these routes or to examine alternatives. The following was cited:

Bus route 16 is the primary route for Park Place.

Bus route 16 has later hours in the evening; alternative routes stop at 5:30.

Bus route 16 is an important route for students attending Old Dominion University.

Communication concerning the closings and changes to the routes was very poor.

These routes are needed to bring citizens to the downtown area.

Bus route 16 is more accessible for persons with disabilities.

The proposed alternatives are not easily accessible for older citizens.

Shira Knight, 831 Bancker Road, #103, Norfolk, VA. Ms. Knight appeared before the City Council and stated that she has participated on a survey team with HRT since 1993. She works with the bus personnel, HRT supervisors, Mr. Harrell, and city staff. She stated that she works to help ensure that the bus routes are clean, safe and crime free. She relayed that she plans to meet with Mr. Williams concerning information she has been gathering on the bus routes. She noted that she is committed to these efforts and will continue working with HRT in the future.

Gary Dubor, Jr., 1433 Kingston Avenue, Norfolk, VA. Mr. Dubor submitted a petition to City Council in support of maintaining bus routes. He also asked that all city employees receive a raise.

Jamie Battle, 3334 Clover Hill Drive, Portsmouth, VA. Mr. Battle asked City Council to consider restoring bus service to the Norfolk International Airport.

James Washington, Jr., 216 W. 33<sup>rd</sup> Street, Norfolk, VA. Mr. Washington asked City Council to fully fund NPS.

Ben Pallett, 230 E. McGinnis Circle, Norfolk, VA. Mr. Pallett thanked City Council for the DROP Program for Public Safety employees. He also thanked them for their willingness to continue discussions on pay compression, benefits and the Step Program.

Jonathan Nye, 111 Granby Street, Norfolk, VA. Mr. Nye asked the City Council to: continue to attract and retain innovative entrepreneurs to our city by; maintain and repair existing infrastructure; continue with development of alternative and multi-modal transit infrastructure and to include bicyclists and pedestrians; and continue supporting NPS to attract and retain quality teachers.

Ricky Ross, President of the Norfolk Federation of Civic Leagues, 6831 Orangewood Avenue, Norfolk, VA. Mr. Ross asked City Council: to fully fund the NPS; to provide senior property tax relief.

Roy Martin, 205 Sir Oliver Road, Norfolk, VA.

Thomas Jones, President of the Library Foundation, 1603 Boyce Drive, Norfolk, VA.

Ann Blanchard, Friends of NPL member, 508 Colonial Avenue, Norfolk, VA.

The above citizens spoke on behalf of Norfolk Public Libraries. They asked the City Council to continue their funding and support and particularly for the branch libraries. Funding is needed for: landscaping, ADA compliance, educational programs and KID zones, parking, lighting, repairs and maintenance.

John Greene, President of East Ocean View Civic League, 4720 East Beach Drive, Norfolk, VA. Mr. Greene thanked City Council and the City Manager for the recent appointment of Mr. James Rogers as the Director of Neighborhood Development. He asked that we continue to develop waterfront areas and ports which are vital for tourism, commerce and citizen enjoyment. He thanked the City Planning Department staff for their assistance in working with developers. He also thanked Sheriff McCabe and his team for their assistance with the Great American Cleanup project.

Jane Bethel, 7936 Merritt Street, Norfolk, VA. Ms. Bethel asked the City Council to support city employee issues related to: compensation, benefits, COLA for retirees, workplace bullying, discrimination and protection from retaliation. She also asked that they support neighborhoods, NPS and senior real estate tax relief.

Richard Willard, 311 W. 35<sup>th</sup> Street, Norfolk, VA. Mr. Willard thanked the City Council for the proposed wage increase for permanent city employees in the current budget.

Dan Montague, 4605 Krick Street, Norfolk, VA. Mr. Montague asked City Council to support the senior tax relief program. In addition, he also asked for repeal of Ordinance 45,488.

Woodrow Moore, Jr., 2787 Tait Terrace, Norfolk, VA. Mr. Moore asked the City Council to support attracting and promoting small businesses owned by minorities, women and veterans.

John Fox, 815 W. 44<sup>th</sup> Street, Norfolk, VA. Mr. Fox thanked City Council for the proposed raises for Public Safety. He also asked City Council to fully fund NPS.

Doug Beckman, 722 Lesner Avenue, #202, Norfolk, VA.  
Francesca Carey, 6235 Wellington Street, Norfolk, VA.

The above citizens asked the City Council to fund a larger Animal Care Shelter. A larger shelter would: enable increasing their live-release rate; provide easier access for employees and citizens; and provide additional parking. The current location is a converted garage that has air circulation and water drainage problems. There are other critical issues that do not adequately meet the needs that an animal shelter requires. In addition, they asked for a more visible location than where they are currently located which is difficult for citizens to find. (Mr. Beckman spoke on behalf of a dozen citizens supporting the new shelter who were recognized in the audience.)

Marianna White, 600 North Shore Road, Norfolk, VA. Ms. White asked the City Council to fully fund NPS. In addition, she asked that City Council support an increase to the federal minimum wage.

Nate Kinnison, 1055 Hanover Avenue, Norfolk, VA. Mr. Kinnison asked the City Council to support NPS. He asked that City Council support Dr. King's plan for focused instructional professional development for teachers. He noted

for the record that those who spoke in support of funding for NPS should also be appealing to their representatives at the state level for funding.

Oneiceia Howard, 2137 Kimball Circle, Norfolk, VA. Ms. Howard thanked City Council and the City Manager for the creation of the Department of Neighborhood Development that advances the priority of safe, healthy and inclusive neighborhoods. She also thanked the City Council for the living wage increase for all permanent employees and the 2% general wage increase for all general employees. In addition, she thanked them for support of the life-long learning priority and the focus on partnering with other agencies and organizations for initiatives such as United For Children.

Vicki Greco, 1433 Brunswick Avenue, Norfolk, VA. Ms. Greco asked the City Council to fully fund NPS.

Corinda Rusinyak, 815 Pecan Point Road, Norfolk, VA. Ms. Rusinyak asked the City Council for their continued support of the Endependence Center. She updated the City Council on services provided by the center such as: information and referral; advocacy; peer mentoring; independent living skills.

With no further business remaining, Mayor Fraim adjourned the meeting.